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S E R M O N,

Preached at

B A R B I C A N,

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SUNDAY, AUGUST 16, 1741.

On OCCASION of the DEATH of the late
REVEREND and LEARNED

Mr. THOMAS EMLYN.

By JAMES FOSTER. *✓*

D U B L I N:

Printed for EDWARD EXSHAW, at the *Bible* on *Cork-Hill*,
opposite the *Old-Exchange*.

M, DCC, XLI.

A

SERMON

Preached at

BARRICKMAN

ON

SUNDAY, AUGUST 16, 1744.



On Occasion of the
Reverend Mr. Barrickman

MR. THOMAS BARRICKMAN

By James Fortson.

DUBLIN:

Printed in Dublin, at the Press of C. & J. M.
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M. DCC. XLIV.

HEBREWS vi. 12.

— *But followers of them, who, through faith and patience, inherit the promises.*

THIS epistle touches on a great variety of subjects. And though the force of the reasoning, in some particular passages, may not be so easily comprehended by *us*, for want of understanding more exactly the phraseology and customs, the opinions and *prejudices*, of the *Jewish* nation in those distant times; yet the ultimate scope of it, and the general view of the argument contained in it, appear plainly to have been this, so to establish the faith, and animate the zeal, of the *Hebrew* converts to christianity, that they might continue firm and unshaken in the holy profession which they had embraced.— The religion of *Christ*, being reduced to plain reason and truth, was offensive to *bigots* and *enthusiasts* of all parties. They revil'd and derided it for being adapted to the state and exigencies of *human nature in general*, and not to the circumstances and prepossessions of *particular countries*; for being a religion of the *heart*, and not of the *body*, and *animal spirits*, for requiring *inward simplicity*, and *purity of conscience*, and not *external ceremony* and *splendor*. In consequence of which, they, who openly declar'd themselves to be disciples of *Christ*, were almost every where describ'd under opprobrious characters, and harrassed by a most inhuman and severe oppression. And surely in such hard and perilous times, when the rights of conscience were unjustly invaded, when an inflexible integrity was

treated as a crime, and punished with the utmost rigor, and those who were faithful to God, and steadily adhered to the sacred cause of truth and virtue, had nothing before them but the gloomy prospect of contempt and public infamy, of the loss of their worldly substance, and of their liberty too, the most invaluable outward privilege of human life, and, to compleat their calamity, were surrounded, as it were on all sides, by the discouraging terrors of an ignominious and violent death; in a situation, I say, so full of danger and perplexity, and to which mankind, from instincts implanted in their nature, have so universal an aversion, the *strongest consolations* were necessary to support their spirits, the most *weighty* and *affecting arguments* were proper to be suggested to allay their fears, and compose their minds to magnanimity and fortitude, and no *dissuaves* could be used too *powerful*, or too *awful* and *awakening*, to deter them from the shame and guilt of apostacy. And, in a more especial manner, were such methods fit to be taken with respect to the *Hebrew* Christians, who, from the secret veneration they still retained for the religion in which they had been educated, and which they really thought to be of *divine original*, were more likely to desert their new profession, than such as had been converted from *Pagan* idolatry, and the extravagant, and, in their own judgment, unnatural delusions of mere *fanaticism* and *impious superstition*.

The Author of this epistle therefore, (who, very probably, was St. Paul) with a view to confirm their resolution, and to prevent their renouncing the truth through the influence of temporal motives, and a dejected pusillanimous temper, argues with them from several topics of the greatest possible importance and weight—from the vastly *superior excellency* of *Christ*, the minister of the *gospel* dispensation,

tion, not only to *Moses*, the public founder and administrator of the *Jewish* oeconomy, but to the *Angels* also, who were employ'd as invisible instruments, to deliver, with circumstances of awful pomp and solemnity, the *law* from mount *Sinai*—from the *higher* and more *eminent advantages* resulting from the *gospel*, with respect to the future world, and the immortal state of our existence, than could, in the nature of things, *possibly* spring from the *Mo-saick* institution—and from the *excellency* of faith in it self, and the extraordinary *effects* it is capable of producing in raising and exalting the human mind to the utmost perfection and dignity; and the *base degenerate temper* of wilful apostacy from the truth through shame or cowardice, which, as it renders our nature vile and despicable, and unworthy of the esteem of all *intelligent* beings, must, of course, deprive us of the favour of the supreme and infinite governor of the universe, who is the only source of substantial and lasting felicity. Upon these, and such like, principles, the Apostle earnestly exhorts the Christians, to whom this epistle is addressed, to *hold fast the profession of their faith without wavering**; to *take heed*, that there was not in any of them *an evil heart of unbelief, in departing from the living God†*; not to be *slothful*, or contract an habit of *ir-resolution* and *indolence*, which *depresses* the soul and destroys its *vigour*, and consequently indisposes it not only for more *difficult* and *uncommon* trials, but for the *ordinary* duties of the Christian life, and the regular practice of *all moral* virtues: And finally, in the words of the text, he urges them to reflect on the *worthy examples* of those upright and pious men, who had finished their course with bravery and distinguish'd honour, and, being filled with a *generous ambition* of arriving at the same height of glory and happiness, to *be followers of them,*

* Heb. x. 23.

† Chap. iii. 12.

who, through faith and patience, inherit the promises. In discoursing farther from these words, I shall,

In the FIRST place, briefly propose some *rules* and *restrictions*, which are necessary to be carefully observed by us, in *imitating* the *examples* of those that have gone before us in the sincere profession and practice of Religion, and, particularly, the *example* of their *faith* and *patience*. And then,

SECONDLY, inforce the advice given in the text, by shewing that there are the highest possible *reasons* to engage us to comply with it.

‘ The FIRST thing I have undertaken is, to lay down some necessary *rules* and *restrictions*, in *imitating* the good *examples* of those who have gone before us in the sincere profession and practice of religion, and particularly, the *example* of their *faith* and *patience*. The examples of great and illustrious persons, who were remarkable for the *superior strength* and *constancy* of their virtue, are, without doubt, justly held in high veneration, and proposed as *patterns* for the rest of mankind to copy after. For this, there is an evident foundation in reason and the frame of human nature, because they not only *instruct*, but powerfully *persuade*; they excite *admiration*, inspire *resolution*, work upon the inward native sense of *ingenuity*, and *attract* and *animate* to exalted and divine improvements. When we see the most sublime and *heroic* virtue, as it were, *substantiated* by being exhibited in real characters, the ground of *despondency* and *inactivity* is, in a great measure, removed, and we are not only prompted, but *encouraged* to *excel*.

But there are two *extremes*, to which mankind are unhappily subject. The one is a *base* and *sluggish* temper, so depressed by indolence, or so weakened, disarmed of its resolution, bereft of all its honour, by the intoxicating pleasures of vice and luxury

ury, as to feel within itself no *aspirings* after true dignity; and, consequently, to be in a manner incapable of a great and worthy *emulation*. The other less common error is, a too *strict* and *close* imitation of bright and distinguished characters; which, where the circumstances are *different*, will degenerate into a ridiculous and offensive *affectedness*, and may possibly betray us in some instances, through the intemperate fervors of a heedless and indiscreet zeal, into more *unwarrantable* and *hurtful* excesses. The *first* advice that I shall give, therefore, is, not to follow the examples of any persons, however celebrated for their wisdom and piety, or for the *steady* and *intrepid* temper of their faith and patience *implicitly*; but to examine and sift them with impartiality, and endeavour to separate their *defects* from their excellencies — that in this, as well as in all other cases, we may make sound *reason*, and not hasty and indeliberate starts of *passion*, the director and guide of our conduct.

Again: It is absolutely necessary, to our forming a just estimate of *particular actions*, that we search into the true *springs* and *occasions* of them, that we consider the *situation* and *character* of the agent, and the *views* and *motives* by which he was influenced and determined; because, without this, it is impossible for us to know, in several cases at least, whether these actions *deserve* and *demand* our imitation, or, indeed, whether they are *right* and *fit* in themselves. For the *very same* instances of outward conduct, as they are differently *circumstanced*, and flow from different *principles*, may be either eminently *wise*: or as remarkably *absurd*, — *moral* or *irregular* — proofs of a *sober* and *rational* piety, or marks of a *heated* and *blind* enthusiasm. And, therefore, unless this point be fixed with a tolerable degree of exactness and good judgment, we may happen *intirely* to *desert*, or, however, *wide-*

ly to vary from, the pattern which we pretend to copy after, even when the *external behaviour* in both is the same.

From hence we are naturally led to another rule, viz. that in following examples which are proposed to us, and most of all distinguished and singular examples, we endeavour to find out those parts that are more immediately adapted to our *condition*, to to our *ability* and *rank*, and the *relative stations*, in which the all-wise providence of the supreme disposing mind hath thought fit to place us. For besides those virtues, that are *immutably* and *universally* necessary to a *good* character, and such as are directly suited to the *peculiar* character and relation which *we* sustain, we shall probably, upon reflection, find some other parts to which we are not *capable* of attaining: And to attempt *these* may be injurious, as well as unsuitable and unbecoming, as the discharging our *proper* obligations, and the duties of religion which bind *invariably* in *all* circumstances, is beneficial, praise-worthy, and amiable. And as it will, I believe, plainly appear, if we consider the subject impartially, that these *particularities* relate not, in many cases, to the *habit* and *inward temper* of piety and moral rectitude, but chiefly to the *outward expressions* and *demonstrations* of it; it must be highly expedient for us (with respect to shining examples, which we find within us a generous and aspiring emulation to resemble) to make a distinction between the *general character* and the *particular actions* that *illustrate* and *display* that character. Thus the *habit* and *inward temper* of piety, of generosity, of benevolence and mercy, may be *imitated* in *all* characters, be they ever so noble and excellent. But it is obvious to the common sense and experience of all mankind, that there are some *particular expressions* of piety and obedience to God, particularly in the life of *Abraham*, who is distinctly mentioned
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in the verse following the text ; there are also some *acts* of benevolence, some *discoveries* and *proofs* of a generous and merciful disposition which are not *universally imitable*. And finally, there are some instances of *faith* and exercises of *patience*, which, being evidently adapted to *special* exigencies, cannot in reason be required of all. So that the *inward*, *i. e.* the *real* and *proper* character may be *one* and the *same*, where there is a necessity in the nature of things, that it should shew itself by *different* actions.—I thought it useful just to hint at these things, not only because *all* the characters that are most highly celebrated in scripture (excepting that single finished pattern, which the Son of God himself has set us) are shaded and blemished by *many*, and some of them by very *gross*, imperfections, and of consequence we may prejudice our own virtue by following too *closely*, the persons spoken of in the text ; but because it is evident to reason that *all* examples must be *rightly* understood, and *judiciously* copied, in order that the transcript may be honourable and useful to *ourselves*, or of any real service to *religion*.

I shall only add one observation more before I conclude this head, and that is, that by imitating the *faith* of holy men in former times, who have born a courageous and undaunted testimony to what they thought was the cause of God, we are by no means to understand submitting our *judgment* implicitly to *theirs* in *unessential* and *doubtful* points, which, in every age of the church, have been the subjects of debate and controversy ; because, as they were all *fallible*, this must expose us to many *unavoidable* errors ; and as they have ever been *divided* in their sentiments, it must lead us into a labyrinth of *endless confusion*. And besides, the text itself has, if it be duly weighed, effectually guarded against all mistakes of this kind—For what is the *faith*, which we are therein exhorted to

follow?—It must surely be that *alone*, by] means of which the persons, whose examples are recommended to us, maintaining their integrity against the most violent assaults made upon it, and came at length to *inherit the promises*. It could not then be any of these dry and unaffected speculations, which, instead of exciting to the *practice* of religion, serve rather to divert our attention from it, which are incapable of raising the mind to *sublime views*, and inspiring *magnanimity* and *force of resolution*; but a *steadfast faith* in God as *the rewarder of them that diligently seek him**, and a firm *persuasion* of the *truth* of his *promises* grounded on the absolute rectitude of his nature, and his unchangeable veracity. This excellent principle let us endeavour at all times to cultivate, to carry it to its utmost degree of *efficacy*, and improve it into a fixed *unconquerable* habit. But if, instead of resting here, we run into the *extreme* I have before mentioned, we shall only render ourselves remarkable for a negligent and rash *credulity*: and can, with no more propriety, be allowed the honour of having imitated the *faith* of those great and brave men who are proposed to us as patterns, than we might be said to tread in the steps of their *patience* (who suffered when they could not *honestly avoid* suffering, and purely for *conscience sake*) if we *voluntarily* expose ourselves to *unnecessary* persecutions thro', an ungovern'd *forwardness* of temper, and an *over-officious* and *precipitate* zeal. I now proceed,

In the second place, to enforce the advice given in the text, by shewing that there are the most weighty and powerful *reasons* to engage us to comply with it,—by being *followers of the faith and patience of the SAINTS*†. And the first and *chief* reason of all, which uncontestably demonstrates this

* Heb. xi. 6. † Rev. xiii. 10.

this to be our highest wisdom and interest, is, that the end which they had in view, and were sure of attaining by their *efficacious* faith and *persevering* integrity, is the most *consummate felicity* that the nature of man is capable of. It is expressed in the text by *inheriting the promises*: the *sum* and *perfection* of which, as they had been *before* given in terms of a more obscure and indeterminate meaning, is included in that great *promise* of the gospel,—*eternal life* *. Nothing more then can be necessary in order to determine, whether this be an *end* worthy to engage our most *sollicitous* and *intense* pursuit, and the securing which will infinitely *overbalance* all our present *conflicts* and *sufferings*, than to enquire a little into the nature of that *eternal life*, which we are taught to expect as the future reward of an *uncorrupted* and *inflexible* virtue. And, in general, that it will be a *perfect life*, according to the *rank in nature*, and the *capacity*, of those who are to be the subjects of it, may, I think, be reasonably inferred from hence; that it is described, in the New Testament, under the most alluring and magnificent images, which *necessarily* raise in us the idea of all that is *great* and *desireable*. And in this view of it—as it respects the *soul*, which is not only the *noblest part* in our composition, but, properly speaking, the only *seat* of *life*,—it must be,

In the *first* place, the *perfection* of *intellectual life*, suited to, and gloriously exalting, those internal rational faculties, by which our nature appears cloathed with such conspicuous *dignity* above that of mere *animal* creatures——The reason of mankind even in the present state, limited and imperfect as it is, is capable of making very considerable discoveries. It can furnish us with a great deal of useful knowledge, with respect to God the author of the uni-

* 1 John ii. 25.

verse, to the wonders and curiosities of nature, and the general scheme and operations of providence. But notwithstanding all that may be said in favour of its *natural* strength and excellence, and the *extraordinary* improvements of it in some particular minds, of a more elevated genius and unwearied application, it must be owned, in general, to be but obscure and confused in points of high importance, where more clear, distinct, and adequate conceptions of things are extremely desirable. The *animal part* of our constitution is a clog and an incumbrance upon the mind; *carnal passions* darken it, and obstruct its operations; *prejudices of education* pervert it; *popular opinions* enslave it: *Objects of sense*, and *trifling amusements*, engross our attention, and the cares of life distract us. And to instance, particularly, in our knowledge of God, how lame and defective is it! How divided, inconsistent, and childish, are the sentiments of mankind even about the supreme and infinite Being, the object of their adoration, and the spring of their happiness! The greatest masters of reason are perplexed in their notions of his *self-existence* and *immensity*, and lose themselves in metaphysical subtilties, and blind disputes. Others, being guided by tradition, or wild through enthusiasm, or forming their ideas of the all-perfect Being by their own passions and prejudices, entertain wrong conceptions even of his *moral character*; imagining him to be a capricious arbitrary sovereign, a partial, stern, inexorable judge: And by such dark and gloomy fancies they not only derogate from his absolute perfection, but torment themselves with superstitious fears, destructive of the peace and comfort of their minds.

But in the future *everlasting life*, the sensitive nature being purged and refined, we must of consequence, be much better *disposed* for *intellectual* pursuits; and it may justly be supposed, that even the *reasoning faculty* itself will be *enlarged* and
strengthened.

strengthened.—And what a vast privilege must it be, to have the understanding always *clear* and *vigorous*, and the decisions of reason that are now slow and laborious, and built, oftentimes, on groundless presumptions and conjectures, *easy*, *quick*, and *certain*; to be establish'd in true and worthy apprehensions of God without that *confusion* which attends our present inquiries, or any mixtures of *dangerous error*; and discern distinctly, in proportion to the capacity of our finite, though perfected, nature, the consummate and most amiable beauties of his moral character?—What *inexpressible* pleasure must it be to be able to account for many *mysteries* in providence, which now offend and puzzle human reason; to see how the *seeming irregularities* of the creation all conspire to answer some grand design; and that what appears *intricate* and *evil* to our contracted understandings, to our presumption and self-conceit, is, upon the whole, perfectly harmonious and well ordered, and a demonstration of the boundless wisdom, and supremely adoreable goodness, of the Maker and Governor of the world? What *exalted* delight must it yield to contemplate the works of God in their *immensity*, *variety*, inimitable *structure*, admirable *uses*, and their *subserviency*, even in the *minute* parts, to the regularity and order of the whole *natural* system, and the general good of the *moral* world? An examination of the *works* of *nature*, all, who have had any experience that way, will allow to be a most agreeable employment; and the farther we carry our inquiries, every *different* object affording *new* matter of wonder and curiosity, the more highly are we entertained: How then shall we be transported, when nature, in its inmost recesses, is more thoroughly exposed to our view, and we discover innumerable beauties, innumerable strokes of exquisite and divine workmanship, which are beyond the *reach* of
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our *present faculties*? The sight of a *new country*, of a *new face* and *scene* of things, is apt to give us very pleasing sensations: What then must we feel when we survey *new worlds*, each particularly fitted to receive and support the race of creatures that inhabit it; all the *intelligent* subject to one universal law of reason; and where there are any *mere animals*, these actuated by instincts, suited to their *peculiar* constitution and circumstance?—The very imagination represents to our thoughts an idea of pleasure, arising from a conjunction of objects *new*, *great*, and *beautiful*, from an admiration, reverence, and love of our Maker, on tracing the footsteps of his wisdom power and goodness, as is not to be described; a pleasure, that, in the prospect of it, fills and *enlarges* the mind, and gives it a consciousness of its high *original*, and superior dignity.

Now that this *more perfect knowledge* of the frame of nature, and the conduct and operations of providence, and, consequently, of the Author and Governor of universal nature, is one part of the happiness of the *upright* in their *immortal life*, may very fairly be presumed, because it is the noblest exercise of *reason*, and one of the most suitable branches of happiness that an *intelligent* creature can enjoy: And, besides, it is strongly intimated in these words of St. Paul,——*now we see through a glass darkly, but then face to face; now I know in part, but then shall I know even as I also am known**. For though he who form'd the mind of man must always have an easy *access* to it, and can communicate, *immediately*, all that knowledge of his perfections, which we are capable of attaining to by our own application and study of his works; yet, that it should be acquir'd, at least in a great measure, in the *natural* way, which is the proper *employment* and highest *improvement* of our rational powers, is most con-

* 1 Cor. xiii. 12.

formable to the *methods* of his providence in *all other* cases : And such knowledge being more strictly *our own*, of native growth and culture, and, of consequence, more praise-worthy and honourable, must, of necessity, yield us greater satisfaction, than if we received it *passively* by a supernatural revelation. —

I shall only add, that the knowledge I have been speaking of, as constituting one branch of our future felicity, will not be matter of mere *amusement*, of mere surprizing and delightful *speculation*, but attended with the most substantial advantages ; as it will constantly maintain in us such a reverence of God, such an esteem of, and delight in, him as the original, and grand exemplar of all moral excellence, as will effectually engage us to the love of virtue and universal goodness, and to aspire after the highest degrees of it, in imitation of his perfect character. Which leads me,

Secondly, to take a short view of the future *eternal life*, which is the appointed reward of a steady *fidelity to Christ* under all our present trials, as it is the *perfection* not of *intellectual* only, but also of *moral life*. Thus considered it rises as much, in respect of real inherent worth, above *intellectual* perfection simply and abstractedly considered, as *rectitude of temper* is more honourable in itself, and the source of more solid happiness, than mere *exactness of judgment*, and *just speculation* ; and, consequently, it will appear in a stronger light, than it could do under the first representation which I have given of it, to be a recompence vastly superior to the utmost possible merit of our *faith* and *patience* under the sharpest temporary sufferings. —

Positive duties indeed, which are suited to the weakness and imperfection of the *present state*, will *hereafter* cease of course, because the reasons of their institution will be entirely superseded : but works of *moral* and *intrinsic righteousness* are of *immutable* obligation, and must, *for ever*, be the chief rectitude

tude and glory, and the supreme satisfaction of all reasonable beings. Accordingly, St. Paul * informs us; that *charity never faileth*; and the same, by a parity of reason, must hold true as to all other *moral qualities*, which are *equally* founded on the *unalterable* nature of things. But there is this comfortable difference in the state of the *faithful*, when invested with *immortality*, from what it is at present, that all their virtues will be more pure and refined, their love to God more ardent and uninterrupted, their zeal and devotion more unmechanical and rational, and at the same time more lively and transporting, and their benevolence to their fellow creatures more sublime, strong, and extensive. They will then feel none of those mixtures of weakness, and of irregular and sinful affections, which now corrupt and deprave their best services, and retard their progress towards *perfection*.—And, surely, this must give us a very exalted idea of their happiness, if our minds are not strangely perverted by *prejudice*, or debased by *sensuality*. For the pleasures of a *pure* and *regular* nature are as much preferable to the enjoyments of *sense*, and the gratifications of a wanton distempered *appetite*, as the *soul* is superior to the *body*, *reason* to *passion*, and the *life* of a *man* to that of a *brute*: Nay, they are of the *same kind* with those of the ever-blessed God himself, and all intelligent spirits above us. And if the exercise of true goodness, though attended with many defects, yields the *sincere*st delight we are capable of in this life; how vastly must our *satisfaction* be *improved*, when our virtue is unalloyed and perfect, and we are thoroughly conformed, according to the capacity and degree of our nature, to the moral excellencies of the infinite Being?

To what has been already said, we may add,

In the Third place, that the happiness of the future state, which is promised as the reward of the *faith* and *patience* of the *saints*, is the *perfection*,

* 1 Cor. xiii. 8.

likewise, of *social life*. Man is evidently formed for society, and endued with particular affections and instincts which strongly prompt and direct him to it. So that, as he is now constituted, was he a *solitary*, he must, of course, be a *miserable* being, and the most warm and vigorous principles and tendencies in his nature would be rendered quite useless. Upon which account we have the utmost reason to conclude, that the future immortal glory of the faithful will be enjoyed in *society*; since there is no more certain rule than the *nature* of things, by which to judge of the *design* of the great Creator in forming them. Besides, this gross absurdity follows upon admitting the contrary scheme, viz. that we shall be deprived, in the most *perfect* scene of our existence, of the pleasures of benevolence and friendship, the most *generous* and *refined* of all our pleasures.

Indeed the happiness of *society* depends, in a great measure, on the principles and dispositions of those with whom we converse, and is, in the present life, frequently interrupted by selfishness and pride, peevishness and ill-nature, by the gloominess and reserved temper of some, and the unguarded freedoms of others; by insolence on the one hand, and too quick a resentment on the opposite side; by a variety of little accidents, and a multiplicity of turbulent and unfriendly passions. Friendships are hastily contracted, and as abruptly dissolved; fancy and prejudice are, in numberless instances, the only directors both of our affection and dislike; and an imaginary affront shall controul every soft impression of humanity, and cancel all the obligations of justice and gratitude. Thus are we ourselves the authors of our own misery, and for the sake of indulging a singular humour, an irregular appetite, an ambitious purpose, or the transports of an impetuous and unenlightened *zeal*, will not suffer human life to be so easy and agreeable a situa-

tion as the gracious Author of nature designed it to be. But if we made *one society* with all the *wise* and *good* that have lived from the beginning of the world, men of the most sublime views, the most amiable and generous dispositions, the most exact and confirmed virtue; if we were joined *in society* with persons of the most exalted understandings, and the greatest compass of substantial and useful knowledge; with *none* but such as resembled God in purity, truth, and righteousness; with *none* but mild and benevolent spirits, who delighted in the happiness of each other; if, as an addition to all this, we were admitted to *converse* with *superior intelligences*, and had the advantage of their larger improvements both to assist our reason, and exalt our morals: Could we imagine any thing more *desirable*? Would it not be the very *perfection* of *social* happiness?—But *thus* it will be, when we shall be united hereafter to the glorious and triumphant assembly of *the spirits of the just made perfect*, to an innumerable company of angels, to Jesus the mediator of the new covenant, and to God the Creator, Lord, and judge of all*, the inexhaustible source of light, life, and blessedness. Nothing indeed so greatly enhances the value of this *eternal perfect life* as this last consideration, that it will be enjoyed amidst the *brightest displays* of God's more immediate presence, under his *peculiar* superintending care, and the influences of his *special* favour. For from hence we are assured, that it will not be subject to *interruption* or *decay*, and that it cannot be in the power of any *malevolent* beings, who may repine at our happiness, to *deprive* us of it. And perhaps, the gracious Bestower of this consummate felicity may communicate to the mind pleasures of various kinds, besides what directly result from the *perfection* of its *natural faculties*. For as he framed, and must, of consequence, be intimately and

* Heb. xii. 22, 23, 24.

thoroughly

thoroughly acquainted with *human nature*, and with all the *possible* ways in which it is capable of being *impressed*, he can certainly affect it with pleasure or pain, by an infinite variety of methods, to us incomprehensible. And from such a pure, harmonious, and happy society as has been above described, over which God himself is pleased graciously to *preside*, all uneasy doubts, all inward darkness and terror, all the dreadful effects of envy, revenge, and sensual extravagance, together with censoriousness and unfriendly jealousies, with the oppression of tyrants, and the cruel rage of relentless persecutors, must be for ever banished.

This, which has been given, is a short *sketch* of the *perfect life* of the *spirit*, the nobler and divine principle in man, in its future state of exalted and transcendent dignity.—The Christian religion assures us farther, that the *body* will be re-united to it, in order to extend and compleat its happiness. But whereas it is now a *feeble* and *decaying* frame, and has in it innumerable seeds and principles of corruption and death; it will be raised an *incorruptible* substance, and flourish in *immortal* strength and vigour. Whereas the weight of the *sensitive* part of our composition oppresses the *rational* nature, and oftentimes overspreads the mind with *confused* and *melancholy terrors*; it will hereafter be refined from all *gross* and *disturbing* passions, and *adapted* to the improveable and active nature of its animating spirit. And, finally, whereas the present body is constituted of *vile* and *coarse* materials, and frequently polluted and wasted by distempers, which deface its *beauty* and *majesty*; at the resurrection it will assume such a *glorious* form, as will render strict piety and persevering *patient* virtue highly illustrious in the sight of angels and men: *Then*, as our blessed Saviour expresses it with the utmost force and elegance, *shall the righteous shine forth*

forth as the sun in the kingdom of their father *. — They shall be crowned with honours inexpressibly superior to the utmost pomp and magnificence of all *mortal* glories, advanced to a higher rank and order, in the intelligent and moral creation, than the *present* condition of human nature can possibly admit of, and be made like unto *the angels of God in heaven* †. They shall bear a part in the *employment* and *felicity* of angels, and resemble them in their *holiness* and *immortality*.

Should it be thought a little improbable, that the very *next step* from human life, *depressed* as it now is, will be an elevation of holy and inflexibly upright spirits to such *eminent* dignity, and to a *fixed unalterable* state of moral perfection and happiness, I desire it may be considered, that though this seems to be *beyond the natural* intimations and discoveries of our *reason*, yet when it is proposed to us, as it is in *gospel promises*, upon the authority of a revelation clearly and strongly attested, *reason* can make no *material objection* to destroy or invalidate this evidence. For nothing can be more agreeable to our *wisest* apprehensions of God's perfections and government, than that the rewards which he is pleased to confer should exceed the services of his creatures, and bear some proportion to his own *boundless munificence*. Nothing is more worthy the Infinite Creator and *Father* of all, than to advance to most *distinguished glory* his humble and obedient *children*, in order to *display his own* supreme and absolute moral rectitude, and his complacency and delight in *their virtues*. — And, perhaps, as mankind, in their *present* situation, are exposed to such a variety of unhappy prejudices, and obliged to controul the influence of such strong passions; as they are liable to be corrupted, to a very great degree, from a wrong education and the force of evil examples, and even to contract, from these

* *Mattb.* xxii. 30. † *Chap.* xiii. 43.

causes, vicious habits, before they arrive to a sufficient maturity and strength of understanding to *discern* and *repel* the contagion; as they are surrounded with snares and dangers in more advanced life, forced to encounter with powerful temptations to vice, and struggle with many discouragements, and oppressing difficulties, in order to preserve a clear and untainted integrity: Upon *these* accounts, perhaps, it may be, that the wisdom of God has ordained—that their reward hereafter shall be so remarkably great, and attended with this pleasing circumstance in particular, “that their *virtue* and “*happiness* shall not be subject to any future *baz-* “*ard*.”—That there is *any other* race of intelligent creatures in the universe, who labour under the same disadvantages, and are clogged with equal difficulties as *mankind* most certainly are, we cannot pretend to say. One thing we are plainly told in the Christian revelation, *viz.* that this was not the original condition of human nature. But that the reward even of *innocence* in the *primitive* state of *rectitude* would have been any thing more than raising gradually (and still in a way of *probation*) to the highest degrees of moral excellence and happiness; that it would have been an *indefectible* condition, and consequently the same with the reward of a sincere and victorious virtue in a state of general *disorder*, and sharp *persecution*, Christianity, that I know of, has no where informed us.—However, I offer this only as a *plausible* account (which the light of nature does not oppose) of that supreme instance of the grace of the gospel, the *promise* made to all the persevering faithful, that in the future glorious world, to which they so ardently aspire, they shall *sin*, and *suffer*, and *die* no more*, but be *confirmed* in the perfection of their nature, and in the enjoyment of immortality, and of bliss unutterable.

* Luke xx. 36,

And as the greatest *sufferings of the present time* are *not worthy* to be compared with this superabundant and *eternal weight of glory, reserved in heaven* † for us; we see demonstrated, beyond all just exception, the reasonableness of a *stable, firm, and undaunted* temper, that not only the soft allurements of licentious sensitive pleasure, and the delusive pomp of temporal grandeur, cannot enervate and corrupt, but which also not even reproach and poverty, nor the prospect of death itself, can so far *subdue and intimidate*, as to make it *bend* to any compliances that are unworthy the *conscience and honour* of a Man, and inconsistent with the immutable obligations of *virtue and piety*.

We ourselves (God be praised) live in a more *quiet and temperate* age, than that in which Christianity was first promulged, or wherein our own forefathers were so grievously oppressed (*resisting* many of them *unto blood*) by the insolence and cruelty of their *Popish* persecutors. But are we, because our present state is *comparatively*, and in respect of former more *enraged and turbulent* times, a *happy* one, exempt from all kinds, and from every degree, of *persecution*? Are we not still liable, if we freely follow our inward light, to be *defamed and vilified*, to be *slighted and deserted* by our friends, and *rudely insulted* by our adversaries? May we not be deprived of many of the *conveniencies and desirable accommodations* of life, and lose the affection and favourable regard of those on whom our very *subsistence* depends, by a strict and scrupulous integrity? Are we not, in many cases, strongly tempted to suppress our *true judgment*, to make use of mean evasive arts and studied ambiguities, in order to be *misunderstood*, and of consequence, strongly tempted to *prevaricate*, in a manner unbecoming our character, in points of considerable moment and influence? If these are all undeniable facts (as they

† Rom. viii. 18. 1 Cor. iv. 17. 1 Pet. i. 4.

most surely are) and if by means of the *reproach* and *popular odium*, which we are in danger of incurring by departing from principles commonly received, and making an open and ingenious declaration of our sentiments, we are cramped and obstructed in our public usefulness, in our enquiries into, or just and full illustrations of, the sacred truths of revealed religion.---There is so much of a *violent* and *oppressive* spirit yet remaining among us, that the upright and conscientious minister of Christ, especially, has need of *patience*, and of a good share of *resolution* and *courage*, to maintain his character in such a manner, that in the final result of things he may be approved of, and rewarded, by the righteous Judge of all, as a *good* and *faithful servant* *. I the rather choose to mention these things while I am supposed to address myself to an audience of *Protestant Dissenters*, because it is in the power of the *Christian societies*, which are formed amongst *them*, to remove from the ministers, to whom they severally stand related, the greatest part, at least, of the inconveniencies and grievances that have been above specified. And I would willingly flatter myself, that to *justify*, and support *honourably*, their own *claim* of religious liberty as one of the original unalienable rights of human nature, and from a hearty *detestation* of every practice that has the least resemblance of *persecution* for conscience sake, *all such*, especially, will *unite* their endeavours, according to their ability and influence, to bring about this happy reformation. By means of which, as the *ministers of Christ* will be encouraged to a more deliberate and impartial study of the holy scriptures,—not only will many incumbrances and difficulties be taken out of the way, which *now* frequently and dangerously beset *their virtue*, and put *even their eternal felicity hereafter* to a greater *hazard*, than it would other-

* *Matth.* xxv. 21.

wise be at (which, surely, is a most *signal* and *commendable* act of charity)—but the knowledge of *true* christianity, likewise, must, in all probability, be more universally propagated, and the cavils of unbelievers, by a *fair* representation of its peculiar doctrines, be more effectually and completely silenced.

Thus have I finished what I intended to offer from the text, both with regard to the explication of it, and the inforcement of the important instruction contained in it. And it is so suitable to the circumstances and conduct of our late most worthy and honoured friend, Mr. EMILYN, so suitable to his *habitual temper*, to his *lively* and *fervent aspirings* after immortal glory, and his *generous emulation* to copy, *strictly*, after the *brightest* patterns in the sacred records, and improve in every moral and christian excellence, that all who were acquainted with his character, and the remarkable incidents of his life, must immediately on hearing it read have made, in their own private reflections, the right application. But besides the pertinency of the subject in itself, it was strongly recommended to me on another account, and that is, his having directly mentioned it as the ground of his *consolation* and *support* in a very tender scene of affliction, which happened to him, as an aggravation of his distress, about the time when he was born down by a violent torrent of *oppression*, thro' the violence of *uncharitable* zeal. The sentiment contained in the passage, which I now refer to, is equally just and affecting.—“ ’Tis indeed, *says he*, most fit, that so
 “ liberal a *rewarder*, as the great God will be,
 “ should appoint us to what trials he pleases; and
 “ the *temper* most worthy to be aspired after by a
 “ *Christian* is, so to cherish his vigorous desires of
 “ heaven as not to become impatient of the business
 “ or the *conflicts* of the present life, by *which* he
 “ may any way serve his *master's* honour. And
 in

“ in so doing it is a pleasure to consider, that the
 “ sharper his trials are, the *brighter* will the glo-
 “ ry be that will reward him; *and also*, that he
 “ is—*following them, who by faith and patience are*
 “ *gone to inherit the promises.*—With whom he
 “ hopes to be joined *again*, not as companions in
 “ *tribulation* and patience, but in the delights of
 “ *endless praise, and joyful love**.”

But it is expected, I make no doubt, that I should enter more distinctly into the character of this truly *great* and *good* man; and I myself think it but a just respect and honour to his uncommon and eminent virtues.—From his early years he had strong and most serious impressions of religion upon his mind, not tinged with *enthusiasm*, nor derived from *mechanical* and *superstitious terrors*; but springing from mature deliberation and rational conviction, and regulated by a sober judgment. His religion therefore was neither *ostentatious* nor *morose*, nor subject to the variations and inequalities of *fancy* and *animal temper*; but chearful, courteous, and affable; modest, composed, and uniform: And the service of God *in spirit and in truth*, the advancement of *pure and undefiled religion*, and primitive christianity, free from all human mixtures and *adulterations*, was the governing principle of his whole life.

He entered upon the ministry amongst the *Protestant Dissenters*, in the latter end of the reign of king *Charles* the second, when all outward prospects were extremely dark and discouraging; and acted all along, even in his younger years, when distinction and popular estimation are most assiduously courted and sought after, not as one who was fond of *advancement*, or aim'd at *temporal advantages*; but whose chief view it was to promote the honour of his great Lord and Master, and by an upright

* Preface to Mr. *Emlyn's* Sermon, intituled, *Funeral Consolations*; being the first he preached after the death of his wife.

and conscientious discharge of his duty, to secure the substantial unfading glories of the heavenly world. His first station was that of a chaplain in a noble family in the north of *Ireland*, where he behaved in so religious, inoffensive, and prudent a manner in a very nice and critical conjuncture, (of which I think it not decent, in this public way, to give a more particular account) that he was highly carels'd, and treated with great respect, by parties very averse to each other. And I mention this, which might otherwise seem too minute a circumstance, because, while he was in this situation, he was offered by his patron a *very considerable preferment*, if he would have conformed to the established church: But the *terms* of conformity, imposed on such as enter into orders, being what he could not honestly comply with (tho he had not then entertain'd the notions, which he afterwards embrac'd, relating to the doctrine of the *Trinity*) he chose rather to decline the offer, than break in upon the purity and peace of his conscience; and thus gave an *early* specimen of an *inviolable* and *disinterested* integrity, which, as he advanced in life, upheld and supported him in a much more *dangerous scene*, and under more *severe* and *perplexing trials*. But yet, notwithstanding this refusal, he was very far from being stiffly bigotted to any particular sect, or from entertaining such *violent aversions*, as persons of contracted views, or of warm and turbulent tempers are daily seen to give into, against those of a different persuasion: For he lived, at that time, with the minister of the parish in the strictest friendship and harmony, and (which I mention to the honour of that minister's *charitable* and *candid* temper) was not only attended by him, when he officiated in the family to which he belong'd but often desired to preach for him in the *Parish-church*.— A service, that his *large* and *generous* principles could not allow him to decline, whose
affection

affection and brotherly regards extended to all *sincere christians*, however distinguished, and unhappily *alienated*, from each other, by the diversity of their speculations, and external modes of worship.

After this, when public affairs, in *Ireland*, were thrown into confusion by king *James* the second's landing there, he retired into *England*, and preached, for some time, to a plain congregation at *Leostoff*. And, here again, he continued to cultivate and maintain an amicable and respectful correspondence with the minister of the *established Church*, till he was invited to *Dublin*, and joined, with the late Mr. *Boyse*, in the pastoral care of a very considerable people; where, as a *Preacher*, he was possess'd of eminent and shining qualifications. For it appears from the few compositions, which he has left of this kind, and from all his other writings *, that he had a solid and penetrating judgment, and an uncommon sagacity and force in reasoning; his sentiment was clear and unperplex'd; his expression easy and natural, but, withal, lively and elevated: We see in his discourses a distinct and comprehensive view of the subject, and an accurate discussion of it, together with a happy mixture of the *true pathetic*, which never agitates the passions, and puts the spirits into an extraordinary ferment by an *artificial eloquence*, and the mere pomp and glare of words; but engages the *affection*, by first addressing to the *understanding*, and *enlightens* in order to *persuade*. And it is no wonder at all to find, that with such great and *rare* talents, in conjunction with these *other* recommending qualities of being a faithful friend, an instructive companion, a wise adviser, and a person of a modest and humble disposition, of an exalted strain of piety, of a simplicity of mind that scorned all artifice and dissimulation; 'tis no wonder at all, I say, that in-

* Vide Mr. *Emlyn's* Tracts in two Volumes;

dued with such *abilities*, and adorned with such *virtues*, he was held in high estimation.

But *alas!* after a few years this scene was quite reversed, unhappily for those who were the authors of his disgrace, and of the public indignities to which he was exposed, but to his own distinguished honour; whom we are now to view as a *brave* and patient *sufferer for righteousness sake*, and for the sacred truth of God. For having, after diligent and humble enquiry, and fervent Prayer to the God of infinite wisdom to illuminate his understanding, and direct him in the pursuit of truth, embraced notions concerning the *Trinity* contrary to those which are *reputed* orthodox, he was dismissed by the people to whom he stood related as their minister; and the odium of *heresy* was so strong, and carried to such a violent height, as to over-rule all other considerations, even to the extinguishing their sentiments of common *humanity*, and cancelling all former ties and endearments of *friendship*. But neither a long and tedious *imprisonment**, nor the being made a *spectacle* of infamy after the manner of *vile malefactors*†, nor an exorbitant *fine*,§ which was exacted for a matter of *opinion* only, to the scandal and great dishonour of a *free* country, of the *Protestant* and *Christian* religion, could in the least shake his constancy. He continued inflexible, in the defence of what he thought to be the doctrine of Christ and his apostles, in defiance of all worldly *terrors*; and would, I make no doubt, if the injustice and rage of his persecutors had been permitted to proceed so far, have taken *joyfully* the utter *spoiling of his goods* (as in fact he did in part) *knowing that he had in heaven a better and an enduring substance* †, and not have counted even his *life dear*, that he might *finish his course with joy*||.—

* Of a year certain, and to continue till the fine was paid, which was beyond his utmost ability to pay. Vide Narrative of Mr. Emlyn's Sufferings.

† With a paper on his breast he was led round the four courts of justice to be exposed. Vide Narrative. § Of a thousand pounds, *ibid.* ‡ Heb. x. 34. || Acts xx. 24.

Thus

Thus we see, exemplified in him, the resolution, fortitude, and zeal of the first professors and preachers of Christianity, when the purifying and invigorating influences of our holy religion were most brightly and gloriously displayed. His *faith* and *patience* were *triumphant* over all the scorn, and malice of his enemies. And as he has, by his sufferings, given a more *unexceptionable* demonstration of an uncorrupted probity and unaffected piety, than it is *possible* for *almost* any one to give, that is engaged only with the *common* trials and conflicts of the christian life; let not the man of *unoppressed* and *unpassive* virtue, let not the *zealot*, who may strenuously assert and vindicate his sentiments without running any *worldly hazard*, presume to a *comparison* with him, but rather let him esteem and *venerate* his memory, as a Christian of a *higher* class: And let us all be thankful to God for such an *example* of steadfast and invincible integrity, in a *vain*, *careless*, and *degenerate* age.

There is one circumstance still behind, that very much heightens the character of this excellent person; and because it is closely connected with the scene of his life we are now reviewing, I chuse to introduce it here. What I intend is, that he retained no *uneasy* or *angry* resentment of the ill usage he had met with, nor discovered the least mark of an *irritated* and *vindictive* spirit; but had such a perfect command over his temper and passions as to suppress the *narrative* of his suffering for fifteen or sixteen years, before he judged it proper to publish it to the world. And tho' the account he has given be a very *moving* one, and can, I think, hardly fail of making a deep impression upon all who read it, if they have any true sense of piety, or tender workings of humanity; yet the impression chiefly arises from the *christian philosophy* and *greatness* of mind therein expressed; the whole strain of it being *benevolent*, *mild*, and *compassionate*, destitute
of

of all keen *invectives*, construing every thing in the most favourable manner, and imputing it to the best principles, and always excusing and extenuating, where the nature of the facts themselves could possibly admit of *alleviations*. I beg leave to conclude this part of the character of our late reverend and worthy friend, with these two passages penned by himself. In the first he gives a noble proof of his *charity*: For having cited these words of St. James——*they shall have judgment without mercy, who shew no mercy**: he immediately adds, “

“ But I heartily and daily pray, this may never
 “ be the portion of any who have injured me. And
 “ as I hope the good God will forgive me if I
 “ have erred, since he knows it is with sincerity,
 “ and that I suffer for what I take to be his truth
 “ and glory; so I also hope he will pardon them,
 “ who have persecuted me only from a mistaken
 “ zeal; for *they did it ignorantly in unbelief.*” In
 what follows we have as bright a specimen of his *Piety* and *Patience*: Though, *says he*, it has been
 “ my great *Gravamen*, or misery, to be laid by in
 “ silence, yet, if the things which have happened to
 “ me have *fallen out rather to the furtherance of the*
 “ *Gospel*, I shall not think myself to have been wholly
 “ useless; because there never will be men wanting
 “ to take the office [of teaching others] while
 “ fewer will take the part I have born, to the hazard
 “ of all that the world counts dear and pleasant. However,
 “ as matters were, I had no room for an innocent
 “ choice, nor any other part but this left me; being
 “ judged unworthy, and made incapable, of all
 “ the rest. And if, in the whole, I may but approve
 “ myself to the *great Judge*, and giver of the prize,
 “ I am not anxious about the applause or censures of
 “ the spectators, who shall be judged also.”

But to proceed: Upon Mr, *Emlyn's* release from his imprisonment, he returned to *England*; and as long as opportunity offered, and he thought he

* James, ii. 13.

might be useful, preached to a small congregation in *London*; which, being, at length, dissolved by the death of the principal persons concerned, and he himself in some degree disabled in the use of his limbs, he retreated into a private and silent obscurity. And in his retirement he lived with great plainness and moderation, but with a mind as *contented* as it ever was in his utmost prosperity. He had no desire of superfluities, no demands of avarice or ambition to gratify. Probity of heart and a good life were, in his opinion, the *true* riches, and the highest honour; though he was favoured with the esteem and friendship of many persons of eminent learning, and of exalted and distinguish'd stations.

He enjoyed an uncommon *cheerfulness* and *vivacity* of spirit, the natural consequence of a *tried* and *approved* integrity; and the progress which he had seen those very principles to make, which had exposed him to so much rage and ignominy, furnish'd him with this *new* ground of rejoicing, that tho' he himself had suffered *as an evil doer, even unto bonds*, yet *the word of God was not bound*.

And in the last extremity of nature, the integrity of his heart kept him from sinking: For he declared but a little before his death, that he felt great comfort from *the testimony of his conscience, that in simplicity and godly sincerity, and not with fleshly wisdom, he had his conversation in the world*—and express'd himself farther to this effect, “ That “ no scene of his life yielded him more *solid satisfaction*, than that in which he suffered.” As length, being quite spent with age and infirmities, and having outlived almost all his contemporaries, both enemies and friends, after a short illness (and enjoying his intellectuals sound to the last) he was *gathered to his fathers*, all the holy *Martyrs* and *confessors* that had gone before him—quietly waiting for the *salvation* of God. And upon this occasion, we are naturally led to follow the advice of the psalmist, *viz. to mark the perfect man,*

man, and behold the upright; for the end of that man is peace; and to consider, that they are eminently blessed who are persecuted for righteousness sake, because GREAT is their reward in heaven.

And now upon the whole; as it cannot in reason be conceived, even supposing that the principles, for which this faithful servant of God suffered were *erroneous* (which however I by no means admit) that one of his sublime piety, strict integrity, and singular goodness, will be rejected by the righteous judge of mankind for a mere error of the *understanding*; as it cannot be imagined, that his honest and diligent endeavours to please and serve his Maker will be found at last insufficient to *plead* for him, but that the *involuntary* imperfections will, at the same time, have *weight* enough even with infinite and unchangeable mercy to condemn him; let us learn from this discourse to practise moderation and mutual forbearance in all our *speculative* differences from each other. Let us dread the thought of *rejecting* those from the friendship and communion of Christians, whom God will *receive* and *honour*; and of giving way to the *extravagant* transports of a wild and furious zeal.— But while we are endeavouring to reduce our zeal to its natural and regular state, and by cutting off all excrescences, to make of it a *rational, calm, and benevolent* principle, let us be careful to avoid the opposite extreme of *lukewarmness* and indifference in the great business of religion. Let us not *be slothful, but followers of them, who by faith and patience inherit the promises.* that we may gain an admittance into the superior world of improving *rectitude* and immortal *felicity*, and join in ascribing, with the glorious and innumerable heavenly hosts, *salvation, honour, and thanksgiving* to the eternal God, *who sitteth upon the throne of SUPREMACY, unrivalled in his majesty and power and to the Lamb for ever and ever.*

T H E E N D.



